

Recognize Teen-age Stress



Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser

This summer we have been inundated with grandchildren. You see, nine of our eleven visited at different times. The last three from Virginia just left with their parents. While the parents attended a meeting in Tennessee, we tried to entertain them.

Most of the time they were contented to visit the dairy farm. Here they rode bicycles and tricycles down a barn hill and on a lane. The speed scared me but not them. The many barn cats were a big attraction too.

One day we took them fishing at a lake in the county. The oldest caught a nice catfish and all of them enjoyed guiding the boat with an electric motor. I was left on shore as four in a boat was the limit. In an hour I caught seven small fish and threw all of them back. At least only three earth-

worms were used. Then I simply sat on an over-turned canoe and waited for them to come back. When an ice cream truck drove through the parking lot, I bought an orange popsicle as I was thirsty — they had the thermos.

Last night I attended a meeting to learn to be a good liturgist. In other words to be a lay reader — speak slowly, loudly and articulate. I've done it before and enjoyed the experience.

There are so many things to catch up on now that our little visitors have gone. Some pears to peel, limas to shell, and corn to freeze. This week I'll have to pick the strawberries by myself and the green beans too.

The grandchildren thought we had a lot of "old things" sitting around and I guess we do, but we enjoy looking at them.

HONESDALE (Wayne Co.) — Adults have no monopoly on stress. Adolescents are particularly prone to stressful pressure from peers, parents, teachers and outside events.

All that stress, however, is not necessarily bad.

Stress is simply our body's reaction to any situation or event that frustrates, endangers, excites or confuses us. Parents need to help their teens distinguish between negative stress and the stress that is good for them — the kind that makes them geared up and excited about living.

What types of negative stress are teenagers feeling? Teens often mention pressure to make good grades in school. Other stressful situations include family hassles over the use of the car, unfinished jobs, curfews, and choice of friends, clothes and social activities. The divorce or separation of parents can be stressful, as can be the illness or death of a family

member, friend or pet.

Outward signs of stress in a teenager can be observed by family members. They include grouching, crying, sleeplessness, not eating or overeating, using drugs or alcohol, smoking, withdrawal, headaches, depression or poor concentration.

Lucy Jackson Bayles from West Virginia University Extension provides the following pointers for adults who are dealing with teenagers under stress:

- Remember that adolescence is not an easy time of life. Teens often go through dramatic physical and mental changes in a short period. Fortunately, most teenagers enjoy life and are happy with themselves most of the time. Nearly everyone, however, has a few bumpy times as they progress through their teen years.

- Growing up means becoming independent. Young adults who do as they are told all the time may

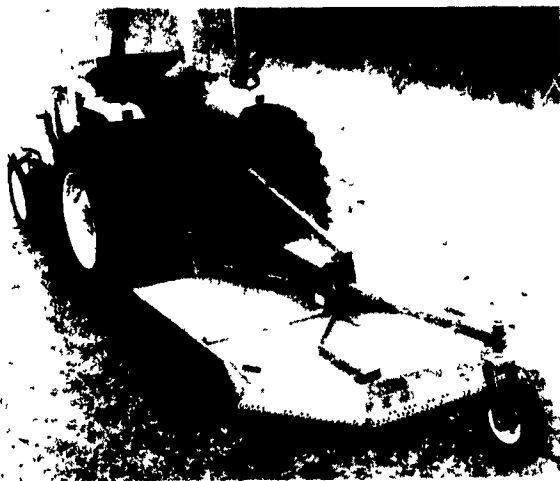
not be well-prepared for a world where they are constantly required to make decisions for themselves. Teenagers need opportunities to be in charge of their lives and practice problem solving and decision making.

Many parents find it helpful to give teens greater responsibility for decisions in non-dangerous areas, such as selecting clothes or bedtimes, while retaining control over important or potentially harmful situations. Parents may have to change their style of parenting to allow their teens to become more independent and responsible for their own lives.

If you would like information on effective parenting - whether preschoolers or adolescents, call Wayne County Cooperative Extension, (717) 253-5970 ext. 239, or stop in the office in the basement of the original courthouse, 925 Court St., Honesdale, PA.



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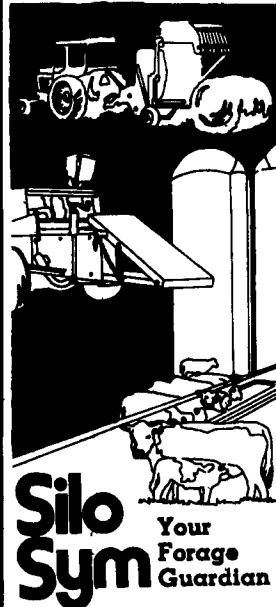
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